

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY PARIS

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FOR DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY SIDNEY SOBER, USDEL PREPCON

FOLLOWING SENT ACTION SECSTATE, INFO KABUL, KARACHI, LAHORE,
APRIL 5, FROM ISLAMABAD RPTD TO YOU:

QUOTE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE ISLAMABAD 2948

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PK, AF

SUBJECT: PESHAWAR REACTION TO GOVERNMENT'S REPORT ON SHERPAO'S
MURDER

REF: ISLAMABAD 286

FOLLOZTNG RECEIVED FROM CONSUL, PESHAWAR:

QM POLITICAL OBSERVERS IN PESHAWAR HAVE REACTED TO
ALLEGATIONS IN "OFFICIAL HANDOUT" ON SHERPAO MURDER
INVESTIGATION WITH MIXTURE OF SURPRISE, SUSPICION AND
DISBELIEF. MAIN FOCUS OF INTEREST OF THESE TBSERVERS
IS CHARGE THAT NISAR MOHAMMAD KHAN, MAIN RIVAL OF
HAYAT SHERPAO WITHIN PPP UNTIL HIS OUSTER FROM PARTY
IN LATE 1973, MASTER-MINDED MURDER PLOT BECAUSE OF
HIS POLITICAL DIFFERENCES WITH SHERPAO.

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2. DURING PAST MONTH CONSULATE HAS BEEN RECEIVING

REPORTS FROM VARIETY OF SOURCES INDICATING THAT NISAR MOHAMMAD MIGHT BE NAMED AS ONE OF CULPRITS IN ASSASSINATION. NISAR WAS ARRESTED SHORTLY AFTER SHERPAO'S DEATH AND HAS BEEN CONFINED IN THE FRONTIER'S MOST NOTORIOUS POLICE LOCK-UP NEAR WARSAK DAM.

3. OTHER REPORTS FROM RELIABLE SOURCES IN CHARSAKDA TEHSIL, WHERE NISAR HAS HIS HOME, INDICATED THAT NISAR HAD FAMILY TIES WITH ANWAR BADSHAH AND AMJAD ALI, THE TWO YOUTHS WHO HAVE BEEN ACCUSED OF ACTUALLY PLANTING THE TAPE RECORDER CONTAINING BOMB WHICH KILLED SHERPAO AND ARE SAID BY THE GOVERNMENT TO HAVE FLED TO "A NEIGHBORING COUNTRY" (READ AFGHANISTAN). THESE SOURCES SAY THAT NISAR ARRANGED BAIL FOR THESE TWO YOUTHS FOLLOWING THEIR ARREST, ONE DAY AFTER ASSASSINATION, FOR CARRYING UNLICENSED PISTOLS, BUT THEY STRONGLY DOUBT THAT THE TWO BOYS HAD ANY ROLE IN MURDER.

4. GOVERNMENT'S CASE AGAINST ANWAR BADSHAH AND AMJAD ALI, AS NWFP INSPECTOR GENERAL OF POLICE INDICATED TO ME LAST WEEK, IS BASED ON EYE-WITNESS REPORTS THAT THESE TWO BOYS PLACED TAPE RECORDER ON CHAIR IN UNIVERSITY HISTORY DEPARTMENT ROOM SHORTLY BEFORE SHERPAO KILLED. OTHERS WHO HAVE FOLLOWED CASE CLOSELY BELIEVE GOVERNMENT FABRICATED THESE SO-CALLED EYE-WITNESS ACCOUNTS BECAUSE IT HAD NO OTHER LEADS ON WHICH TO BUILD A CASE.

5. CONSULATE'S CONTACTS SAID THAT UNTIL RELEASE OF OFFICIAL HANDOUT THEY HAD BEEN UNAWARE THAT GOVERNMENT PLANNED TO LINK WALKI HAN'S SON ASFANDYAR WITH SHZPAO MURDER. IT WAS THEIR OPINION THAT GOVERNMENT ONLY BROUGHT ASFANDYAR INTO CASE TO LEND CREDENCE TO ITS CONTENTION THAT NAP HAD MAIN ROLE TO PLAY IN MURDER. BUT EVEN WITH INCLUSION OF ASFANDYAR IN MURDER PLOT, THEY BELIEVED GOVERNMENT'S CASE AGAINST NAP WAS WEAK ONE, AND CERTAINLY NOT STRNG ENOUGH TO JUSTIFY BANNING OF PARTYM

6. COMMENT: CONSULATE HAS SUSPECTED FOR SOME TIME LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THAT IT WAS UNLIKELY GOVERNMENT WOULD BE ABLE TO DEVELOP CASE LINKING NAP WITH SHERPAO MURDER WHICH WOULD HOLD UP IN REGULAR COURT OF LAW. SEVERAL LOCAL LAWYERS ARE NOW OF OPINION THAT WEAKNESS OF GOVERNMENT'S CASE WILL FORCE IT TO RESORT TO SPECIAL TRIBUNAL FOR TRIAL. (RULES OF EVIDENCE THERE ARE MORE RELAXED.) GOVERNMENT'S DIFFICULTY IN PREPARING CASE FOR TRIAL IS OF COURSE COMPOUNDED BY FACT THAT ANWAR BADSHAH

AND AMJAD ALI ARE NOW IN AFGHANISTAN.

7. ONE OF MOST INTRIGUING ASPECTS OF CASE IS THAT
NISAR MOHAMMAD IS ONE OF FOUNDING MEMBERS OF PAKISTAN
PEOPLES' PARTY WHO AT ONE TIME IN 1967 OR 1968 WENT
ON HUNGER STRIKE WITH BHUTTO IN LARKHANAM NISAR IS
MEMBER OF FAMILY WHICH IS VERY MUCH PART OF THE PESHAWAR
VALLEY ESTABLISHMENT. SINCE MID-1974 HE HAS BEEN
PRESIDENT OF THE MAIN LANDLORDS ORGANIZATION (ITTAHAD
PARTY) IN THE NWF. BYROADE UNQUOTE. INGERSOLL

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